(d) whether the unscrupulous travel agents are mostly responsible in bringing Air India into red; and

(e) if so, the corrective steps Government propose to take to overhaul the system of Air India and to make it profitable?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) to (e) Some complaints have been received with regard to the working of the commercial wing of Air India. These are under examination.

Increasing the Frequency of Delhi-Guwahati-Imphal Flight Service

646. SHRI W. ANGOU SINGH: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any plan to increase the number of flights from Imphal to Delhi via Guwahati or any other airport;

(b) whether the private airlines are reluctant to operate in the North-East Airports specially Imphal airport;

(c) if not, the reasons for the Sahara airlines to drop the flight to Imphal airport; and

(d) the number of private airlines in India with their names?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) to (c) Operators are free to operate to any place/on route in their commercial judgement subject to compliance with the Route Dispersal Guidelines, which provide for certain minimum operations in the North East and some other far flung areas.

(d) At present, M/s Jet Airways (I) Pvt. Ltd. and Sahara Airlines are the only private scheduled operators operating scheduled air services in the country.

Development of Visakhapatnam Airport

647. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has agreed to develop Visakhapatnam airport for landing of wider aircrafts;

(b) if so, the reasons for not taking up the job as yet; and

(c) the measures proposed to expedite the job after obtaining clearance from the Naval authorities?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Introduction of Direct Flight Between Hyderabad and Jeddah

648. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether direct flight from Hyderabad to Jeddah is proposed to be introduced on public demand; and

(b) if so, the measures taken to extend the runway at the Hyderabad airport to allow landing of international flight conveniently?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Cochin as Embarkation Point for Kerala Hajis

649. SHRI C.O. POULOSE: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state whether the Government are considering the request of the State Government of Kerala for declaring Cochin International Airport as an Embarkation Point for Kerala Hajis from next year onwards?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): Yes, Sir. The Cochin Airport is being considered as an embarkation point for Kerala Hajis from Haj 2000 onwards.

Construction of Airport at Kannur

650. SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:
SHRI C.O. POULOSE:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state: